

1241840

Registered provider: Wessex College Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of six establishments operated by a private organisation. It provides accommodation and care for up to four children and young people aged over 11 years who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The organisation also owns a school and a farm, which children and young people from this home may attend.

The home's manager was registered with Ofsted on 17 August 2018.

Inspection date: 24 February 2020

Date of last inspection: 24 September 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

After the last inspection on 24 September 2019, at which time the home was settled, there was a change in the mix of children and young people. Between 21 October and 15 November 2019, there were five serious incidents, including bullying, drug misuse, assaults on staff and damage to the home. Some incidents resulted in restraints. During this three-week period, the children and young people were, at times, beyond the staff's control. This was frightening and unsafe for all concerned.

The staff worked hard to respond to individual incidents. Leaders and managers took swift action to keep the children and young people safe. They called a pre-disruption meeting, where a placing authority made a decision that one young person should move on from the home.

This young person left the home on 15 November 2019. During the 14 weeks since that date, the home has been calm. Relationships between the staff and the young people are much improved. There have been only two minor incidents. There has been one incident when a child went missing. Staff acted correctly to return him safely to the home.

Leaders and managers say that, in recent months, they have reviewed the way in which children and young people are admitted to the home. They now exercise greater caution when making decisions about referrals. Consequently, the present mix of children and young people in the home is positive. All are in full-time education and making good progress.

A new requirement has been made in response to two examples of poor practice. A member of staff allowed a young child to help with maintenance tasks. He was given a screwdriver, which he then used to threaten staff. This could have resulted in injury. In the second incident, a child made a negative comment about a member of staff. This was not reported to the on-call manager at the time.

The home's leadership and management have improved since the last inspection. The registered manager monitors the home well. She receives effective support from the deputy head of care. The registered manager continues to work towards her level 5 qualification.

The home is almost fully staffed and now uses agency staff only rarely. When extra staff are needed, the manager has access to bank staff who are already known to the children and young people. This contributes to team stability and provides continuity of care.

The requirement from the last inspection, relating to consistency and quality of management monitoring, is fully met. Regular supervision, appraisals and suitable training ensure that the staff feel valued and supported.

The home's leaders and managers have also improved their consultation with children and young people and outside agencies by seeking regular feedback. It is too early to assess the impact of this consultation, which will be reviewed at the next inspection.

The quality of the home's environment is generally good, but the children and young people's bathroom requires updating. The current bath is too small for some of the children and young people to use comfortably. A recommendation has been made.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/09/2019	Full	Good
22/01/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/09/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/03/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i-vii)(b) and (e)).</p> <p>This is with particular reference to ensuring that children do not have access to bladed hand tools (such as screwdrivers) until they are of an age and understanding to manage the risks associated with these items responsibly and safely. Also, ensure that incidents of bullying are responded to as a matter of urgency and that staff understand the need to report any matters that could amount to allegations to a manager without delay.</p>	31/03/2020

Recommendation

- Ensure that children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9). In particular, ensure that bathing facilities are updated and that baths are of a suitable size for all the children and young people who live in the home.

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1241840

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wessex College Limited

Registered provider address: Wessex College Limited, 4 Cedar Park, Cobham Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne BH21 7SF.

Responsible individual: Joanne Sams

Registered manager: Louise Knight

Inspector

Heather Chaplin, Social Care Inspector

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